

#### Members

Sen. Gary Dillon, Chairperson  
Sen. Ed Charbonneau  
Sen. Connie Sipes  
Sen. Sue Errington  
Rep. Vanessa Summers  
Rep. Dennis Tyler  
Rep. Cleo Duncan  
Rep. Phil Hinkle  
Hugh Beebe  
Dr. Gladys Beale  
Captain Michael Carmin  
John E. Taylor  
Dave Becker  
Mary Rosswurm



## INDIANA COMMISSION ON AUTISM

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Authority: IC 12-11-7-2

### MEETING MINUTES<sup>1</sup>

**Meeting Date:** October 22, 2007  
**Meeting Time:** 10:00 A.M.  
**Meeting Place:** State House, 200 W. Washington  
St., 233  
**Meeting City:** Indianapolis, Indiana  
**Meeting Number:** 2

**Members Present:** Sen. Gary Dillon, Chairperson; Sen. Connie Sipes; Sen. Sue Errington; Rep. Vanessa Summers; Rep. Dennis Tyler; Rep. Phil Hinkle; Hugh Beebe; Dr. Gladys Beale; Captain Michael Carmin; Mary Rosswurm.

**Members Absent:** Sen. Ed Charbonneau; Rep. Cleo Duncan; John E. Taylor; Dave Becker.

Senator Dillon, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. Members of the Commission on Autism (Commission) introduced themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

### **Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services (DDRS): Update**

Peter Bisbescos, Director, DDRS, presented updated information regarding the number of individuals who are on the waiting lists for the following waivers as of September 2007: (1) autism-- 3,542, (2) support services (SS)-- 10, 386, (3) developmental disabilities (DD)-- 15,296. Mr. Bisbecos explained that the waiting lists numbers may be duplicative because individuals on the autism waiting list may also be on the other two waiting lists.

Mr. Bisbecos stated that DDRS plans to flesh out the true unduplicated numbers of individuals who are eligible for waivers by having either DDRS personnel or a contracted organization's personnel make phone calls to all individuals on the DD and SS waiting lists to confirm eligibility. He explained that there may be individuals on the DD and SS waiting lists that were never tested for eligibility. From January to September 2007, there have been 249 individuals found to be ineligible for the DD waiver. (See Exhibit A) The individuals on the autism waiting list are all eligible for waivers because an individual must have an autism diagnosis in order to be put on that waiting list.

Mr. Bisbescos distributed a guide for consumers concerning Indiana Medicaid home and community-based services waiver programs as well as other home and community services that help adults and children with disabilities receive services they need to live and work in the community. (See Exhibit B)

### **Indiana Resource Center for Autism (Center): Update**

Dr. Cathy Pratt, Director, Indiana Resource Center for Autism, gave a brief historical overview of the Center and discussed information contained in the Center's annual report for July 2006 to June 2007. (See Exhibit C). The Center engages in the following activities:

- (1) Conducts outreach training regarding positive behavior supports and evidence-based practices for teaching and supporting individuals with autism spectrum disorders across community, home, work and school settings;
- (2) Engages in individual consultations with the goal of facilitating an understanding of the issues, promoting collaboration among team members, and suggesting services and resources;
- (3) Trains and provides ongoing support to school teams to enhance programs and build local capacity to better educate individuals across the autism spectrum;
- (4) Conducts research that provides information to enhance quality programming for persons on the autism spectrum and that informs policy decisions;
- (5) Serves as a state clearinghouse for information about autism spectrum disorders by responding to individual requests for information, maintaining a library collection of relevant books and videos for public distribution, and monitoring current information on external resources, trends, policies, services, current treatments, workshops;
- (6) Produces and disseminates information for professionals and families on autism spectrum disorders through newsletters, brochures, print, videotapes, and via the web; and
- (7) Evaluates materials and training to determine impact and need for change.

Dr. Pratt presented information on autism incidence estimates by county (See Exhibit D) and the number of students identified with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in Indiana's public schools for the 2006-2007 school year. (See Exhibit E)

In response to Commission members (Sipes, Summers, Hinkle) questions concerning the Center's activities and budget, Dr. Pratt gave the following responses:

- (1) The Center receives a line item in the state budget.
- (2) The Center's budget has decreased over the years.
- (3) The Center was targeted to receive federal help to develop autism training programs.
- (4) The Center developed models to be used for training police, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel.
- (5) The Center has been working with the Indiana Autism Society and Easter Seals/Crossroads to develop materials for autism training for physicians.
- (6) The Center is researching and preparing to:
  - (A) bring training experts on autism to Indiana;
  - (B) increase funding; and
  - (C) open an autism training site in collaboration with the Indiana University School of Psychology.
- (7) The Center provides numerous publications free of charge to public and private entities, support groups, pediatricians and medical personnel, schools, and individuals, including the following brochures:
  - (A) the Center's informational packet (See Exhibit F), and
  - (B) *When your Child is Diagnosed With an Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Resource for Families Whose Son or Daughter is Newly Diagnosed.* (See Exhibit G)

#### **Indiana Department of Correction (DOC): Update**

Tim Brown, Legislative Director, Indiana Department of Correction (DOC), informed the Commission that currently there is one autistic individual housed in a DOC juvenile state facility. Currently, the total offender population of DOC is 27,000.

In response to Commission members (Dillon, Hinkle, Summers) questions concerning mental or developmentally disabled offenders in DOC facilities, Mr. Brown explained that during the intake process for an offender, the offender is screened for any mental health issues by a master's level staff member. If the staff member believes that the offender needs to be forwarded to a psychologist or psychiatrist, then the offender is forwarded at that time. Mr. Brown also stated that pre-trial diversion programs are often offered to offenders who are diagnosed with mental or developmental health issues and therefore the offender may not be placed in a DOC facility.

#### **Indiana Department of Education: Update**

Dr. Robert Marra, Associate Superintendent, Division of Exceptional Learners (Division), Indiana Department of Education (DOE), discussed the DOE's meeting notification process for parents of special needs students concerning changes to Article 7 (Indiana special education rules promulgated at 511 IAC 7-31). The process includes sending notification of meetings to local superintendents, principals, special education directors, parent groups, and IN\*SOURCE (Indiana's federally funded parent training and information organization). The notice is to be distributed to parents through those sources.

Dr. Marra informed the Commission of the following changes being proposed to Article 7:

- (1) Allowing any adult who works with a special needs child to receive skills training in order to properly implement the student's individualized education program ( I.E.P.). The specific skills needed by the adult will be written into the student's I.E.P. and the money to pay for the training will be provided accordingly;
- (2) Removing the case load caps for preschools (currently the ratio is capped at 2 adults to every 8 students); and
- (3) Allowing a parent who disagrees with a change in the student's I.E.P. to request a meeting to keep the I.E.P. in place.

In response to Commission member Sipes questions concerning state public university programs that include autism training for future teachers and the Praxis exam, Dr. Marra gave the following responses:

- (1) There are few programs in state public universities concerning curriculums for training future teachers to educate special needs students.
- (2) There are no reading questions on the Praxis special education license exam.

### **Committee Discussion of Other Business**

The Commission discussed a request by Michelle Trivedi, parent of an autistic child, for the Commission to support legislation to be introduced during the 2008 session of the General Assembly that would require board certification for applied behavior analysts. The Commission agreed to hear further information on the certification process and the need for board certification at the Commission's next meeting.

Commission member Beales informed the Commission that mercury is no longer being used in childhood immunizations but may still be used in flu shots.

The Commission also discussed:

- (1) Requiring course work that includes training for future teachers in dealing with special needs students at state-supported university schools;
- (2) Requiring school corporations to establish procedures to notify parents of children with special needs about Article 7 meetings;
- (3) Having the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, DDRS, come to the next Commission meeting and explain what their agency funds have been used for and why the waiting lists for services are so large.

The next Commission meeting was scheduled for October 31, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m.